

PEOPLE & THINGS: By ATTICUS

FOR many reasons the Pilgrims' dinner in honour of Mr. John Hay Whitney at the Savoy last Thursday was a memorable one. Not only was it an occasion to honour a new American Ambassador who was educated at Oxford and whose grandfather held the same ambassadorial post, but also to greet in him a comrade in arms during the Hitler war.

Yet it was the background of Suez and Bermuda that gave the dinner its unusual significance. As is always the case a family quarrel is more violent than any other. In such a setting Selwyn Lloyd's speech was therefore admirable. It was friendly, it was adult and it was constructive. He described Bermuda as a meeting in which the family quarrel was forgotten and the old friendship restored. I thought he was going to say that American policy towards Britain was no longer "Hands across the seize".

Selwyn Lloyd is a musician as well as a politician, which is probably why he speaks so well. To an orator the sound of words is almost as important as the sense.

Altogether when the distinguished gathering broke up there was a general feeling that the English-speaking family were in full accord again.

A Wimbledon Farewell

WIMBLEDON will not be the same this year. I do not mean that there is likely to be any departure from the traditional slaughter of British players, but am thinking of the slim, soft-voiced Lord Templewood, who has retired from the Presidency of the Lawn Tennis Association.

How often on that fateful last Friday we have seen him con-

duct the Duchess of Kent to congratulate the foreigner who has won the men's singles championship from another foreigner. Lord Templewood's step is as light as that of a baller dancer, although that old devil calendar says that he is 77 years of age.

The older Members of the House of Commons still remember that day when the then Sir Samuel Hoare made his resignation speech after what was known as the Hoare-Laval Pact. Although a skilful and graceful ice-skater, he had fallen while doing a whirl and there was a patch upon his nose. But it did not lessen his dignity. Instead he looked like a duellist who had been pricked by a rapier. Wimbledon will not be the same without him.

The Refugee Man

WHAT a task is that of Auguste Lindt, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who came to London last week! He cannot even count the numbers of his charges. Maybe he will be made responsible for the Chinese refugees in Hongkong—800,000 of them, believe it or not—maybe he won't. The million—odd—ex-Palestinian Arabs are not in his bailiwick. He is certainly concerned with a quarter of a million "displaced persons" of the second world war, especially 50,000 still languishing in camps.

These are among what he calls "the old refugees." But they are not the oldest. There are still a lot left over from the first world war: Syrians, Armenians in Greece, White Russians—15,000 of them in China, for the most part wanting more than ever to get out.

'Do It Now'

But Dr. Lindt is not disturbed by his task. He is a

bluff man of vigour and strong will, a business-like man who reduces problems to what can be done and what must be done next. And what must be done, he says, is to solve the problem of the "new refugees," the Soviet-fleeing Hungarians, this year.

"This year?" I asked incredulously. Yes, says (M. Lindt, the problem is quite manageable. Altogether, 128,000



DR. AUGUSTE R. LINDT.

fled to Austria and Yugoslavia, of whom fewer than one-third now remain in camps. If only the overseas Commonwealth countries, and the Americas, took a fair share, all would be gone within a few months. And never would these countries get, in the mass, a better quality of immigrant—young, vigorous, and mostly skilled.

Britain, I am glad to say, has done its full part in taking in these victims of the Soviet. M. Lindt is asking the Government only for some more money. How much, I asked. Only £25,000. It seems an absurd sum compared with the magnitude of the problem.

Atonement

THERE is joy in Heaven when a sinner repenteth, a truth which brings us to the strange case of Mr. J. B. Priestley. A year or more ago he visited Canada and addressed a literary luncheon in Toronto. At the end of the address the Chief Librarian of Toronto said that Mr. Priestley would be glad to autograph copies of his new book.

But Mr. Priestley said he would do no such thing. There was a great rumour that went right across the country and a prominent British publicist wrote an article entitled "Don't be beastly, Mr. Priestley." Since then J.B. has atoned. He wrote a play for a gifted group of Canadian actors, a play about Canadians in Canada. It scored a big success over there and shortly it is going to be produced in London.

Men of the Wood

LAST week I gave some information about the rebellion in that section of St. Marybone known as St. John's Wood. Here is an extract from a letter which has reached me from a woman resident:

"I must thank you for your reference to the vandalism in the Wood... the ghastly work of erecting huge cement serpents with illuminated heads as you described."

Perhaps the Borough Council should parade through St. John's Wood so that the ratepayers could have a look at them. In fact the residents might imitate the custom of first nights at the theatre and boo the council. Apparently the St. John's Woodsmen and especially the Woodswomen do

not intend to let this uglification go through without a fight.

Paddington Too

NOR is the civil war to be confined to St. Marybone. I have had a letter from Lord Kinross, from the salubrious Borough of Paddington:

Do the borough councillors of St. Marybone ever cross the Edgware Road to the north of Paddington after dark? I don't suggest that, before condemning St. John's Wood to death by sodium lighting, they do so. They will find themselves passing from a colonial into an infernal region, peopled by creatures with the aspect of pubescent corpses. It is surely the ultimate decadence of a civilisation thus to degrade human beings for the sake of motor cars.

Who is next? This column is completely neutral against the sodophobe authorities.

A Great Public Servant

TO attain the age of so full enjoyment of mental and physical vigour is a goal reached by few. But when such a man receives a letter from the Prime Minister "among his many friends the great takes on a special importance."

Maurice Hankey, as he is still so widely known was in the truest meaning of the words a great servant of the State. We can follow his career from the young officer of the Royal Marines to first Secretary to the cabinet and the confidant of a succession of Prime Ministers. It was a memorandum of his, written nearly 50 years ago when he was Assistant Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence, which led to the inception of the famous War Book which records everything that must be done by every Department in a war emergency.

He was made a peer in 1939 and wisely kept his name. His figure was slight and dignified but his words were forceful and at times defiant.

Among his favourite axioms are: "Be moderate in hating your enemies, because they may be your allies in the next war," and "Respect the law."

That lively mind is still at the service of the State.

In Praise of Wine

LE Comité National de Propagande en faveur du Vin et l'Institut National des appellations d'origine des Vins et des Eaux-de-vie brought lightness and brightness to London last Wednesday when it offered its wines to a discriminating list of guests at the Cafe Royal.

There were pretty French girls looking as if they had just stepped out of the vineyard. There were men in robes and cassocks representing the "Brotherhood" of different territories. In such a setting it seemed quite in order that Donald Wolfit moved about and looked as if at any moment he might burst forth as a rejuvenated King Lear whose two wicked daughters had taken him back in their affections.

The whole thing was so well managed that I set aside the doubts raised a few nights ago on television when an expert, after tasting a wine, gave it as his opinion that it was a 1959 vintage!

Tailpiece

THE other night I was reading a book of essays by Arthur Balfour and came across this passage: "In popular usage the very word 'criticism' suggests the detection of faults and the ignoring of merits; in popular esteem the refusal to admire marks the man of taste."

I commend these words to all critics of the arts and entertainments in general. The critic who is extravagant in his

denunciation and sparing in his praise is often fundamentally unsure of himself and is afraid of being caught for a mug. In life and in the arts it is the man of taste and understanding who chooses words of encouragement and discovers merit even in the beginner who is unfamiliar with his medium.

People and Words

"Only if humbling Britain and France and strengthening Soviet influence in the Middle East can be considered successful, can Suez be counted a success for the United Nations."

—MR. E. G. MENZIES, Prime Minister of Australia. "Acting is an overcrowded profession of mediocrity."

—MISS HARVEY UZZ. "To the \$40,000 dollar question 'How long will we continue to need a Navy?' the answer that wins the \$40,000 dollars is obviously 'Just as long as we remain an island.'"

—ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET EARL BEVERIDGE. "No Army accounting system can be said to be efficient which has as its basic assumption—as the present one has—that every officer and man in the British Army is by nature a liar and a crook!"

—MR. A. KENNEDY, M.P. (Con Strand.)